

# Introducing St Mary's and the vision for gospel growth in the South Notts Churches



**We are pioneering an exciting model of gospel ministry in south Nottinghamshire. It aims to make and grow disciples of Jesus who are equipped, through God's word, to live and share the salvation found in Christ, in a way that is scalable, fruitful and contextually meaningful.**

**The strategic starting point for this journey is St Mary's in East Leake. For the last four years, St Mary's has been growing rapidly in number, depth of discipleship, and gospel-centred identity. But we have only started to scratch the surface of what God might do here.**

Over the next four years, by focusing on identifying, training and supporting well-disciplined lay leaders, we aim to release the potential for locally-resourced gospel growth in East Leake, and to use the same discipleship infrastructure centered on St Mary's to envision, enable and support the locally-rooted revitalisation of mission in the surrounding communities of South Nottinghamshire.

Foundational to this is for St Mary's to transition and become a full resource church, in line with the Southwell and Nottingham Growing Disciples vision. We are seeking to build a church with a deep culture of relational discipleship, in which the Bible is taught and lived out. We want congregation members to become the main drivers of growth, equipped for fruitful witness to the gospel among friends, family and colleagues, and equipped to serve in leadership roles that enable church congregations to flourish. This congregational flourishing will seek to be a source of genuine blessing to local communities and other churches in the south Nottinghamshire area.

This investment in local leadership aims to create a step change in church growth throughout South Nottinghamshire by (a) giving St Mary's the capacity sustainably to plant or graft new worshipping communities, and (b) directly empowering, equipping and envisioning new and existing local missional leaders in other benefice churches to pursue gospel growth in their own context.

In order to enable this move away from a traditional village benefice structure and towards a model in which a resource church acts to support and catalyse locally led mission, two new ordained roles have been created. The first is a 'Transformational Change' Associate Minister, whose role will focus particularly on developing the discipleship stream within St Mary's and through it to identify, train and then offer ongoing support to lay leaders as they start new congregations in East Leake. We would anticipate the first of these to be a new congregation at St Mary's, and aimed particularly at unchurched children and young families. This would be led alongside a part-time Children and Families Minister, funded by St Mary's. The second is a House for Duty Associate Minister. They will be part of the St Mary's Staff Team and have special input into the benefice revitalisation: enabling all churches to be supported as they make their own changes towards growing disciples in their own community.

There are few blueprints for developing truly thriving churches in a post-Christendom, semi-rural context. So if creatively initiating new things, building on recent fruitfulness, and faithfully discipling God's people with his word to prayerfully discover effective paths for mission today, why not join us as we seek to take the gospel to south Nottinghamshire?